

CLEAN CLAIMS**9. (Amended)**

A printhead for an ink jet printer, the printhead including:

an array of nozzles and respective colorant ejection means for ejecting colorant onto a media substrate to be printed; and,

a nozzle guard positioned to inhibit damaging contact with the exterior of the array of nozzles;

said nozzle guard having a shield covering the exterior of the nozzles,

said shield having an array of passages in registration with the array of nozzles so as not to impede the normal trajectory of the colorant ejected from each nozzle;

said nozzle guard including fluid inlet openings for directing fluid through said passages, to inhibit the build up of foreign particles on the nozzle array, wherein:

said fluid is passed through said passages at a velocity that is less than the velocity of the ejected colorant.

17. (New)

A printhead according to claim 9 wherein colorant droplets are ejected at a velocity of 3m/s.

18. (New)

A printhead according to claim 9 wherein the fluid is passed through the passages at 1m/s.